UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/8/Add.37
24 July 1997

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties due in 1993

Addendum

MALDIVES

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

[21 July 1997]

General measures of implementation

1. In November 1996 the Unit for the Rights of Children (URC) was transferred from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare.

2. The National council for the Protection of the Rights of the Child is now headed by the Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare. The National Council is comprised of 15 members from 12 different bodies: Ministry of Health (2); Ministry of Education (2); Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare; Ministry of Atolls Administration; Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment; Ministry of Defense and National Security; Ministry of Information, Arts and Culture; Attorney-General's Office; Unit for the Rights of Children; the Ministry of Youth and Sports; and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs; and two members from the Citizens Majlis, (Maldivian Parliament).

3. The total number of cases referred to the Unit for the Rights of Children since its inception is 1,554 (to end of 1996). The figure for 1996 is 557.

Manpower development

4. URC has implemented a full programme of training both in the Atolls, to provide new training to equip personnel with knowledge and skills in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and working with children; and in Malé, to supplement and build on previous training.

5. By the second quarter of 1997 basic training courses had been completed in seven atolls; Fauh Mulah, Alif Atoll, Haa Daal, Meemu, Vaavu, Seenu and Lhaviyani. A total of 160 people were trained, who are now in a position to offer a basic social work service to children and families in these atolls. Continuous training events and refresher training will, however, be required and planned for subsequent years.

6. In Malé, professionals have been trained in order to raise awareness of children's rights in their own place of work and to assist URC by voluntarily accepting cases for counselling. Seven training events have been run, two by an expatriate consultant psychiatrist (1994), one by a consultant from Childhope International (1995), two by lecturers from an Australian University and two by URC staff, in groupwork techniques and training for home-school liaison officers. Three members of URC are currently pursuing undergraduate studies, in Psychology and Social Work, overseas.

7. URC has now established a central data base, to collect and store information on cases referred. Information is received from the atolls on a three-monthly basis and entered into the central database, for purposes of monitoring and research.

Constraints on development

8. The 1995 population estimate was 249,281, and the population growth rate 2.8 per cent.

Public Information

9. Distribution of copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has increased, all students at the Institute of Teacher Education, and all workshop participants have received copies.

10. URC has produced five posters, six pamphlets and two booklets and distributed these throughout Malé and the atolls. Materials have been sent to Atoll and Island Offices; to hospitals, health centres and clinics; schools and other institutions on the islands.

11. Additionally, URC has a weekly radio programme on child related issues.

Definition of the child

12. Marriage below the age of 16 is strictly discouraged.

The right to life, survival and development

13. The infant mortality rate for 1995 stood at 32 per 1,000 live births (Statistical Yearbook of Maldives, 1996) thus showing an increase of two deaths per thousand, when compared with the 1994 figure of 30 per 1,000 live births. However, the rate has been fluctuating between 30 and 34 per 1,000 since 1990, indicating that a saturation point may have been reached with existing methods of disease control and care.

Article 37

14. Corporal punishment is prohibited in schools.

Family environment and alternative care

Articles 9 and 20

15. In order to implement article 9 in Maldives and provide for those children who need to be separated from their parents, or those children deprived of a family environment (art. 20) the Government has agreed to provide a national residential establishment for girls. It is anticipated that such provision will be operative within the next three years.

Articles 5, 18 and 27

16. A "Family Law" is in the process of formulation, which will address the issues of the high divorce rate, divorce compensation, child custody, and parental support of children. The Bill is expected to be introduced in Parliament early in 1998.

Article 39

17. The services available for the victims of abuse and neglect will be expanded by the residential institution for girls. It is intended that the institution will operate on therapeutic lines, to enable psychological recovery and social reintegration.

18. With individuals from each island now being trained through the counsellor training workshops held in the Atolls, opportunities for receiving counselling are increasing nationally.

Basic health and welfare

Article 23, Disabled children

19. Whilst there have been no infrastructural developments, the Government has adopted a community based rehabilitation approach (CBR) as the policy for disability in Maldives. Some preliminary training in CBR occurred in 1996. Adopting a specific policy shows recognition of the issue.

20. A training programme has been conducted, by URC and the School Health Programme, to train teachers and school health assistants from each atoll in the identification and rehabilitation of children with disabilities and special needs.

Article 24, health and health services

21. The Government expenditure on health in 1995 constituted 9.6 per cent of the National Budget according to the Statistical Yearbook of the Maldives, 1996. However, there has been a reduction in international grants for expenditure on health.

Article 27, standard of living

Nutrition

22. 1994 statistics show 21 per cent of children wasted moderately and severely and 0.5 per cent wasted severely. A survey in 1995 revealed 23.6 per cent of school children suffering iodine deficiency disorder and 65.5 per cent with low urinary iodine. Iodine deficiency has recently been exposed as a potential micronutrient deficiency in children. No data is available on the status of vitamin A deficiency. No data is available regarding the prevalence of night blindness, though isolated cases have been reported.

Sanitation/Safe Water

23. By 1995, 100 per cent of the urban population and 85 per cent of the rural population had access to safe water, and 100 per cent of the urban population and 26 per cent of the rural population had access to safe sanitary facilities.

Article 28, Education

24. The quality of primary education was reviewed through a national survey. There is near universal enrolment of children in primary schools, without gender disparity, with 85 per cent of children completing primary school.

25. Vocational training courses are offered by Maldives Institute for Technical Education and Maldives Centre for Management and Administration and computer courses are available through the English Preparatory and Secondary School and Malé English School and at several other private institutions.

Special protection measures

Article 40, The Administration of juvenile justice

26. There are preliminary developments in relation to establishing a separate institution for housing juvenile offenders, with the hope of

establishing a separate juvenile court system in the future. To facilitate the introduction of this system, personnel from the Ministry of Defence and National Security Services, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Education and URC underwent a course on "Criminology and juvenile justice" conducted by Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia in 1996.

Article 33, Drug abuse

27. A drug rehabilitation unit is shortly to open on a nearby island to Malé, expatriate staff are already in employment and local staff are undergoing training. The unit will provide rehabilitation in a residential setting.

Article 34, Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

28. Girls who have been sexually exploited or abused will be afforded greater protection through the establishment of a residential institution.

- - - - -